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# MEDICAL MISSIONS.

ISABELLA BIRD BISHOP.

We have received permission to print the following valuable article by Mrs. Isabella Bird Bishop, whose charming books of travel have made friends for her in many homes. It was read in the Woman's Congress at the World's Fair in 1893, and while it was incorporated in the report of that Congress, it has not been printed, as a whole, in any periodical except MISSION STUDIES. Mrs. Bishop's personal observation in many lands gives weight to her words, and her testimony is the more valuable because it is given from the standpoint of an intelligent and unprejudiced traveller.

IT is as a traveller that I am to address this audience, and as one who has been converted from indifferentism to the duty and importance of missionary effort by seeing in the foreign mission field the work and influence of the consecrated lives of Christian men and women, many of them citizens of your great republic. In four years and a half of Asiatic travelling during most of which

time I have lived among the people with an interpreter, I have learned of the sore needs of the unchristianized world, with its sorrows and its sins.

Here and in Britain, those who stay at home and help missions naturally dwell more on the work done—to me it is the work undone which bulks appallingly, the ten hundred and thirty millions without Christianity nineteen centuries after His birth, and the awful fact that in spite of the increased activity of the church, heathenism has so gained upon our efforts that while something like four millions of persons have received baptism on making a Christian profession within this century, the natural increase of the world's non-Christian population has been two hundred millions in the same time. It may be that "the times of this ignorance God winked at," when our knowlage was but of the fringe of heathendom, but in our age, when travelers have scarcely left any region untouched, and Geographical, Ethnographical, and An-

thropological societies bring the knowledge of "Dark Continents" and the condition of their peoples to our very doors, apathy or half heartedness is without excuse, and our responsibility is vastly increased by our enlightenment.

On no point is our modern information more explicit than on the amount of suffering which is everywhere the result of native methods of medical treatment. and in little more than half a century, the church, waking up at last to see that in order to do her Lord's work she must adopt her Lord's methods, has increased her number of medical missionaries from something under ten, to three hundred and fifty-nine, seventy-four of whom are women, all pledged to the Master's double command, "Heal the sick, and preach the Gospel." But what are they among so many?

But what does illness usually mean in non-Christian lands? We must remember that throughout the greater part of the heathen world, illness is believed to

be the work of demons, or more correctly a form of demonical possession, and a sick person is an object of loathing as well as of fear. The house is regarded as polluted by his presence. in many lands he is removed to an out-building where he is supplied once a day with food and water, and he is shunned by his nearest relations.

If his healing is desired, the doctors and priests are summoned gongs and drums are beaten, fires are lighted as the centres of diabolical dances accompanied by frenzied chants, incantations and exorcisms are resorted to, the stomach of the patient is beaten with clubs to drive out the supposed demon, he is subjected to untellable tortures. and often when the malady becomes chronic, or is severely infectious, he is carried to a mountain top or river bank, supplied with a little food and water and is left to die alone.

In the case of women, the barbarities inflicted by those who profess to attend them in sickness. cannot be related in

such an audience. It is enough to say that native midwifery abounds in ignorant and brutal customs, which in thousands of cases produce life-long suffering, and in many, fatal results.

In all countries a belief in the efficacy of certain idols, shrines, stones, trees or waters prevails, and no Buddhist, Hindu or Moslem would spend an hour of the day or night without a charm, amulet, or talisman, purchased from the priests, round his neck or arm, with the object of warding off sickness.

The shrines of the medicine gods of all nations are sure of votaries and offerings, and even in modern Japan the red lacquer medicine god Binzuree is universally resorted to by and for the sick, the method of invocation consisting in rubbing with the finger that part of the idol's person which corresponds to the afflicted part of the patient.

Of the sanitary and anti-septic precautions required in sickness these people have no knowledge, and their wounds,

whether natural or artificial, are. in the hot weather, alive with maggots.

The alleviations which in Christian countries mitigate the sufferings of the dying are unknown to them, and they regard death as the triumph of the supposed demon. Amidst beatings of gongs, drummings, shoutings and incantations, with their dying thirst unassuaged, and with their nostrils plugged with a mixture of aromatic herbs and clay, or with mud of sacred streams, our heathen brethren and sisters are passing in an unending, ghastly, reproachful procession into Christless graves at the rate of forty-three millions a year.

Ghastliest and most solemn thought, that for every minute in which we have been assembled here, eighty-three Christless souls from death beds such as these have passed into the presence of their Judge—and ours!

Their physicial woes justly move us, but their Christlessness and hopelessness have an infinity of piteousness.

Over their sick beds no Divine Comforter broods, no relation of the Fatherhood of God or the Brotherhood of Christ has reached their ears, or one glimmer of that light which He Who is the resurrection and the life has shed on the future of the human spirit. Where are our agonizing prayers, where is our heart-brokenness, where is our great personal self-denial for the heathen?

"Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears that I might weep day and night for the slain,' groans the prophet Jeremiah. When St. Paul wrote of these "whose end is destruction," it was on a page blotted with tears, and when He Who alone knows what destruction is beheld the city which was to reject Him His tears flowed over its self-chosen doom.

Nearly all doors are now open to the medical missionary. Who will enter in, of you my Christian sisters? The person of the Hakim is every where sacred. It is the glorious work of the missionary

physician to overthrow those barbarous systems of medical treatment to which I have briefly alluded, and to substitute for them the scientific methods, the skill, and the suavities of European medicine, as well as to inculcate tenderness for suffering and reverence for human life, and to our medical sisters is the honor given to enter the domestic bastiles of the east with healing and light, and to make an end by their skilled and beneficent methods of the barbarous practices of native midwifery, and of the many remediable sufferings of our own sex.

But it is as the missionary physician, "the Hakim in Christ's likenes," "the Hakim with the Bible," that the medical missionary follows in His Master's footsteps. He must subvert worse systems even than those of the native treatment of diseases. In the dispensary, the home, and especially in the hospital he has opportunities which fall to the lot of no other of awakening a sense of the disease of sin—of sin which cannot be

atoned for by penances, pilgrimages, or gifts, or washed away by ceremonial ablutions and of gently opening the blind eyes to the love and atonement of Him Whose servant he is. In Moslem and Buddhist lands the evangelistic missionary is unsought, unwelcomed, shunned. He must create his work by slow and persevering toil, and at the best he rarely reaches the undercurrents of the thoughts and life of the people among whom he dwells. In the case of the medical missionary the work seeks *him*, claims him, pursues him, absorbs him. Crowds, compelled by the grip of pain, throng around him, and as soon as his stammering tongue can speak of Jesus his audience is ready to listen. Without effort he learns the inner lives, the religious ideas, the superstitions, the social difficulties, criticisms on Christianity, the pressure of circumstances, the ignorance and the craving of all classes, and some at least, of those who have learned to love and trust the servant.

are won to love and trust the Master.

In a survey of many mission fields, and of vast, unevangelized regions, especially in Asia, where Christianity comes into contact with Islam, and the higher philosophical non-Christian systems, I have come to think that the multiplication of male and female medical missionaries is the most important work in connection with the missions which lies before the church, as well as the most blessed form of missionary effort to which young men and women who are consecrated to foreign service can aspire.

Bodily suffering and spiritual blindness are calling with an exceeding bitter cry for the life-work of consecrated men and women but the need can be met by the consecrated alone.

For the half-hearted, the indolent, the selfish, the doubting, and the unloving, there is no call and no room. There must be the "double qualification,"—intense love to Christ, and intense love for those for whom He died.

In conclusion, I desire to emphasize my unqualified testimony to the value and power of medical missions. To my thinking none follow more closely in the Master's footprints than the medical missionary, and in no work are the higher teachings of Christianity more legible and easily recognized. The true missionary-doctor witnesses by his life-work to Christ the Healer, and is an epistle of Christ, translating Christ's love and teaching, into object lessons which all can understand.

Once again the lame walk, the deaf hear, the blind see, to the poor the Gospel is preached, and if the lepers are not cleansed, the miseries of their condition are greatly mitigated.

In looking back upon medical missions in different parts of the world, I cannot recall one where the physician was truly "a Hakim in Christ's likeness" which was not healing, helping, blessing, making an end of much of the cruelty which proceeds from ignorance, soften-

ing prejudice against Christianity. opening closed doors for the Gospel. and while pointing to the cross which is elevated for "the healing of the nations," telling in every work of love and of consecrated skill of the infinite compassions of Him Who came "not to destroy men's lives but to save them."

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